

OUTDOOR RECREATION TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 14, 2004

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

State Capitol Complex, East Building
First Floor, Southeast Conference Room

MEMBERS/ASSOCIATE MEMBERS PRESENT

CURTIS, Wes	Governor's Office - State Planning Coordinator
MORGAN, Bob	DNR
KORENBLAT, Ashley	Western Spirit Cycling – President
STOWELL, Dennis	Iron County Commissioner
MCKEE, Mike	Uintah County Commissioner
OKERLUND, Ralph	Sevier County Commissioner
CUTLER, Riley	Wasatch Touring - Owner/Manager
RICHINS, Ron	DCED, Div of Business & Econ. Dev. (for Jeff G.)
REEDER, Dean	DCED, Div. of Travel Development
RASMUSSEN, Roody	PETZL
STEVENS, Lynn	San Juan County Commissioner
METCALF, Peter	OIA
HARMSSEN, Steve	Salt Lake County Commission
TULLIUS, Mary	DNR, Parks and Recreation
WALTERS, Clara	GOPB - Staff

GUESTS/ PRESENTERS

JOHNSON, Myrna	OIA
CORDELL, Roy	National Parks Service
BANKS, Don	BLM
HARJA, John	DNR
MEYER, Ed	DCED, Div of Business & Econ. Dev.
HARMER, Dave	DCED
ANDERSON, Nan	UTIC
WILLIAMS, Dave	Utah Travel Council
VONDERESCH, Leigh	Utah Travel Council

I. Call To Order/Introductions

Wes Curtis called the meeting to order. Introductions of those present were made.

II. Reports

A. Letter to Senator Bennett Regarding BLM budget for San Rafael

Wes gave a copy of the draft letter to Senator Bennett and read it to the members. It was reviewed by the Governor's office and is ready to be sent to Senator Bennett. The members accepted the draft as written and it will be sent within the next few days.

B. Sub-group report on Westwater land exchange proposal

John Harja met with the BLM concerning the Westwater land exchange proposal. The BLM's response from a state level was that it's a great start. SITLA will offer all of the lands in Castle Valley instead of half and continue to offer identified lands in the Colorado Corridor. He also mentioned other lands that will be identified as exchange targets. The delegation prepared legislation pertaining to the land exchange and it has been submitted. Everyone is working hard to get the land exchange right and so far things have been moving well.

Wes asked if there was a hesitancy of voting to support the San Rafael Swell exchange and if not would the Task Force make a motion to adopt the San Rafael Swell land exchange as one of its priority areas of focus and support, contingent upon final approval of the sub-committee group.

Ashley made a motion, that the Task Force will adopt the San Rafael Swell land exchange as one of its priority areas of focus and support, contingent upon final approval of the sub-committee group. Commissioner McKee seconded. The motion passed.

When the Task Force receives approval from the sub-committee, letters will be drafted and sent to the appropriate contacts to express their support of the Westwater land exchange.

C. Lease protest / site visit

Wes discussed the protest lease letter. Commissioners, OIA members, and state representatives flew over and drove around the lease protest areas to get a good perspective. He then asked Peter Metcalf to give a short report on the results.

Peter's discussion covered concerns about the Green River eligibility for Wild and Scenic River status. The Task Force may need to work on mitigating the impact of drilling or considering it a recreational gem and worth preserving. Another concern covers the best use of the land. The whole area is a great repository of oil and gas. Everyone he spoke to agreed that this area was worth preserving.

John Harja put up a map showing areas that had been accepted and leased. Commissioner McKee mentioned the county was concerned about designation of Wild and Scenic Rivers for the Green River. A pipeline could not be put along the river and with water being so scarce, issues are being considered that would take water from the Green River.

Discussion moved to well drilling, what it takes to get to the production stage for wells and costs incurred in going through the process. Money the state receives from the Federal Government was also discussed, as well as jobs created from the wells.

The members also looked at finding a balance between preserving and multiple-use for lands. Wes challenged the Task Force members to find the balance of land use and receiving income for the counties and state, against preserving the land as a recreational gem. He suggested talking to the local governments, citizens, BLM and others to find

what the balance should include and what it takes to strike a balance. He asked for suggestions for producing guidelines to help in finding the balance.

Suggestions for inclusion into the guidelines included:

1. A definition for a “world class back-country experience”
2. An adequate outdoor experience requires no visual, no lights, little or no sound
3. Create a standard of A, B, and C for permits to know what it takes to stop sales
4. Pull back protests on lands the Task Force is not concerned about and focus on those they do care about

It was decided to create the guidelines then contact the BLM through a letter and ask for time on parcels that are critical to the Task Force. In return we wouldn't protest other parcels.

Ashley made a motion to have the sub-committee draft guidelines the Task Force can use internally, for a back country experience on the river. A request to the BLM for comment time on parcels they feel are critical will be made and the Task Force will release protests on other parcels. The Task Force will be informed via email, fax, or phone before establishing the criteria. Commissioner Stevens seconded the motion. All in favor and the motion passed.

(Lunch)

III. Recreation Gem Identification

A. Preliminary candidates (In-house nominees)

Wes went over what has been accomplished so far on identifying recreational gems within the state. He then introduced a preliminary list of recreation gems he asked John Harja to create. John discussed the list and how the areas were chosen. The Task Force did a preliminary selection of the ones they felt were most critical.

To identify the gems they should begin by looking at regions in the state and focus on what can be done with those regions to preserve or promote them as gems and then make a matrix for the state.

The environmental groups and BLM have already looked into areas that need protecting, so it would be best to start with what they have accomplished and then move on to other areas that have not been protected. Along with areas, it was suggested to add recreational places.

Steve Harmsen described a good way to put the areas and activities together. It covers looking at regions then place activities within those regions. Next, match them to recreational activities that take place within them. Add the concern level of promoting those places such as: viability, management, infrastructure, economic potential and suitability for promotion. His idea was accepted by the members.

A. Local approaches: Sevier County example – Ralph Okerlund

Ralph spoke about the presentation AGRC gave to the counties and the letter sent out for comment. Some groups active in their area were invited to the Commission meeting, along with federal and state agencies, for a discussion on identifying gems and other important sites in the county.

B. Next Steps Discussion

Through a discussion, the Task Force created a list of how to approach recreational gem designation and ways to identify, protect or promote sites,

- a. Use AGRC's website for inducing local groups to buy-into the Task Force's idea
- b. Go through the AOGs and land-use people of county commissions
- c. Submit lists of areas/sites to the BLM as part of their RMP process to gain notice that certain places are considered recreational gems
- d. Create categories containing local desire, concern level, viability/management, infrastructure, economic potential, suitable for promotion, protection, and heritage

The Task Force decided to create a working group consisting of Dean Reeder, Dennis Stowell, Ralph Okerlund, and Myrna Johnson to put together a fill-in-the-blank questionnaire, with comment lines at the end. This form would ask the participant to rate areas identified for support and the activities that take place in those areas. It was decided to include a letter from the County Commissioners stating support for the Task Force's approach to identifying recreational gems.

IV. Presentation on Fees and Value Creation – Dean Reeder

Dean discussed interest in fees on Public Lands and presented a resolution created by the Western States Tourism Policy Council that concerns new user fees. Part of the resolution emphasized that fees can be packaged with other services such as search and rescue insurance, guides and outfitters, concessionaires, tour operators, and gateway businesses. The resolution concluded with support for and development of a long-term permanent plan for a national recreational user fee system in all public land in the United States. A bill passed the House that lines up with the values of the resolution more fully than any other. A similar bill passed the Senate.

He concluded with the hope that the Task Force will put some value on the fee system when putting the matrix together. Discussion concerning his presentation focused on giving local control to the fee system.

V. Task Force Discussion

Wes brought a question to the group. "How can we increase economic return and job/business creation related to outdoor recreation?"

Some of the comments centered upon the recreating populace living in the area where they recreate and buying locally rather than going to big stores that send their money out of state. Another was the community and the state creating a partnership with the Task Force facilitating that partnership. Permitting issues with the BLM continue to be a way to increase good economics in outdoor recreation and ATV usage and the trails they use have increased the economy in the state.

VI. Presentation Tourism Branding / Revenue Issue – Nan Anderson

Nan gave a presentation on promoting and branding the State of Utah, in economic terms. They are actively building support for a bill that will be sent to the State Legislature on increasing overall tourism in Utah. Tourism is a major economic engine in Utah.

UTIC (Utah Tourism Industry Coalition) is building a coalition of industry partnerships from private and public sectors to support performance-based funding for the “Tourism Marketing Performance Fund.” This is a performance-based mechanism which will add additional dollars to advertise and market Utah as a tourism destination.

For every \$8.64 in state and local tax revenue, one dollar could go to investing by the state in advertising. This will generate \$63.6 million additional funds to the General Fund. It will take a few years to get to the \$63.6 million level, but the key issue is the impact to education, growth and other needs that would receive additional funds.

Nan explained how areas in recreation would benefit by the State’s investment. She then went on to explain how the funding mechanism works. There is active support from industry, as well as local counties for this effort and she asked for support from the Task Force. We asked the group for their reaction to the request and the consensus of the Task Force was to endorse the proposal.

Dean made a motion to endorse the UTIC proposal and to encourage the Legislature to support it. Peter seconded and the vote was unanimous.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, November 18, 2004
10:00 am to 4:00 pm
State Capitol Complex**

Adjourned: 3:30 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS:

- 1. The task force will adopt the San Rafael Swell land exchange as one of its priority areas of focus and support, contingent upon final approval of the sub-committee group.**
- 2. The sub-committee will draft guidelines the Task Force can use internally, for a back country experience on the river. A request to the BLM for comment time on parcels they feel are critical will be made and the Task Force will release protests on other parcels. The Task Force will be informed via email, fax, or phone before**

establishing the criteria. Commissioner Stevens seconded the motion. All in favor and the motion passed.

3. Create a working group consisting of Dean Reeder, Dennis Stowell, Ralph Okerlund, and Myrna Johnson to put together a fill-in-the-blank questionnaire, with comment lines at the end. This form would ask the participant to rate areas identified for support and the activities that take place in those areas. It was decided to include a letter from the County Commissioners stating support for the Task Force's approach to identifying recreational gems.

4. Endorse the UTIC proposal for investing in their bill to the Legislature on state tourism.